



COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

PREPARED FOR WILLIAMSON COUNTY BY:



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*DRAFT OF CHAPTERS 3 & 4 FOR
STAFF AND STEERING COMMITTEE
DISCUSSION ONLY*



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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

To be drafted.



CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

To be drafted.



CHAPTER 3: VISION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines a vision and supporting goals and objectives for the Update to the Williamson County Comprehensive Plan. This represents an important milestone in the preparation of the plan. These goals are based on both an understanding of the trends and forces shaping Williamson County as well as an understanding of the desires of the community as communicated through various community outreach efforts.

The vision, goals and objectives are organized around several themes. These themes are:

- Land Use
- Community Facilities and Services
- Transportation
- Natural and Cultural Resources
- Economic Development
- Housing
- Intergovernmental Coordination

The vision, goals and objectives serve as the basis for strategies that embody actions to accomplish the goals; the strategies and more specific plan recommendations will be developed later, after public reaction to these goals is solicited.

WILLIAMSON COUNTY VISION

Williamson County will continue to be a rural county with new growth limited to agricultural and very low-density residential uses in designated rural areas; moderate-density residential and non-residential uses in limited Planned Growth Areas; and higher densities in designated areas around municipal boundaries. The character of rural historic landscapes and villages will be preserved and strengthened, and open spaces and environmental resources will be preserved as part of connected systems. Adequate public services and facilities will be available in a fiscally responsible manner concurrent with new development, with levels of service to be coordinated with land use policies – areas



designated for rural development will be provided with rural levels of services, and areas designated for higher or suburban densities will be provided with suburban levels of services. The Williamson County economy will be strong and diverse, with economic development opportunities strategically focused in Planned Growth Areas and within the Urban Growth Boundaries. Williamson County will have a balanced range of housing that provides opportunities for residents of all generations.

LAND USE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOAL 1: EFFICIENT GROWTH

Williamson County will grow and develop efficiently relative to the cost and timing of providing infrastructure and public services.

Objective 1: Growth will be coordinated with available or planned public services and infrastructure.

Objective 2: Land use will be planned in concert with public services and infrastructure. Low-density uses will be planned in areas not efficiently served by public services, and compatible higher densities will be planned in areas that can be efficiently served with public services pursuant to the future land use plan.

Objective 3: A compact development pattern will be identified that results in a more cost efficient infrastructure expansion and the reduction in the perception and/or realities of urban sprawl. Open space and rural preservation, along with the protection of our natural and historic resources will be promoted through a compact development pattern with new growth encouraged to occur in and around existing or planned population centers. Urban and suburban types of growth will be discouraged in rural areas that do not have sufficient services.

Objective 4: The County will use this Comprehensive Plan as a tool for making development decisions regarding land use, zoning, and the expansion of public infrastructure.

GOAL 2: FISCALLY SOUND GROWTH

Williamson County will grow and develop with a fiscally responsible land use pattern where new growth will fund its fair share of the costs of public services and facilities needed as a result of that growth.



Objective 1: The costs of growth will be allocated fairly between local governments and the development community. Growth should generally pay its own way and new developments should include appropriate road improvements, as well as public land dedications or equivalent funds-in-lieu for schools, parks, and public service facilities that will be demanded by the new development.

Objective 2: Williamson County will develop a system of measuring fiscal impacts of growth in a manner consistent with regional methods and models.

GOAL 3: SUBURBAN AND RURAL DISTINCTIONS

Existing and planned suburban areas will be stable, vibrant, and well defined; development in rural areas will be reflective of low-density developments that are designed to maintain the true rural character of the area.

Objective 1: Distinctions between areas currently categorized into Rural districts, Estate districts, Suburban Estate districts, Suburban districts, Neighborhood Conservation districts, and Crossroad districts will be clearly defined in terms of appropriate land uses, quality and character of development designs, geographic delineation, and their relationships to public services and facilities.

Objective 2: Growth will continue to be organized around a geographic system of Urban Growth Boundaries, Planned Growth Areas and Rural Areas, consistent with Tennessee Public Chapter 1101.

Objective 3: New urban or suburban development will be targeted in or around the existing cities and designated major activity areas at densities that promote an efficient utilization of land while being compatible with existing neighborhoods and municipal comprehensive plans. Planned Growth Areas will accommodate new growth with a balance of land uses, including open spaces, although certain Planned Growth Areas, or portions of Planned Growth Areas may continue to maintain a rural character based on the future land use plan.



Objective 4: Development in Rural Areas will maintain rural character. Lower gross densities will be preserved in those Rural Areas, with new development concentrated on a smaller portion of a development site so as to permanently preserve open space. Particular emphasis will be placed on preserving environmentally and/or historically sensitive areas. Compatible rural businesses will be accommodated within the Rural Areas.

Objective 5: Existing villages and hamlets will be preserved. Villages will be preserved through the creation of a focused area plan and development guidelines designed to allow new developments only when they are deemed to be compatible with the existing character of the area, including historic character where appropriate. Hamlets will be preserved through review of development proposals pursuant to policies of this Plan.

Objective 6: The continuation of agricultural and equestrian uses is encouraged as long as is feasible, but as such uses are converted to non-agricultural uses, the rural density, character and sensitive environmental features of the area will be preserved.

GOAL 4: QUALITY OF GROWTH

Williamson County will ensure that land resources are allocated for uses that will accommodate and enhance the rural character, protect the natural and historic resources, ensure adequate community facilities, and provide a range of housing - resulting in the preservation of a high quality of life.

Objective 1: The opportunities presented by growth will be maximized, and the negative impacts of growth (i.e. traffic, land use, storm water, environmental, loss of community character) will be minimized.

Objective 2: The design quality and appearance of new development in Williamson County will be exemplary. High standards for residential and non-residential development quality will be implemented and enforced – with emphasis on land use compatibility, open space preservation, traffic impacts, and environmental impacts.



Objective 3: Williamson County will continue to encourage citizen input through the development review process as a means to further promote design quality.

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOAL 1: CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION

Williamson County will conserve and protect the natural environment, open spaces, and historic resources it has come to be known for.

Objective 1: Williamson County will protect unique resources from the negative impacts of development including, but not limited to, water quality, historic roads and sites, stone walls, farmland, forests, streams and rural character.

Objective 2: Williamson County will continue to implement and enforce measures designed to protect natural resources such as watershed protection, water conservation activities, stream and lake setbacks, and floodplain controls.

Objective 3: Williamson County will promote and emphasize the protection of natural and historic resources in areas where major infrastructure, such as regional transportation facilities, are proposed.

Objective 4: The preservation of environmental quality will be emphasized in planning for new development and public services.

GOAL 2: OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION

Williamson County will promote the permanent preservation of open space systems throughout the County for the purpose of environmental protection, community character and aesthetics, recreation, and heritage tourism, with an emphasis on farmland, woodlands, hilltops and slopes and other environmentally sensitive areas.



Objective 1: Williamson County will develop and implement coordinated plans for a linked system of open space and conservation areas.

Objective 2: Williamson County will develop a variety of public and private tools to preserve open space in order to maximize the opportunities to protect open space over the long-term.

Objective 3: Williamson County will encourage the preservation and incorporation of open space in individual developments pursuant to design standards that promote quality open space that is usable and accessible to all residents. These open spaces will be coordinated with, and linked to open space in adjacent developments and other communities.

GOAL 3: HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The preservation of Williamson County's historic resources will be promoted as an important contributor to the community's livability and quality of life, as well as the community's economic development.

Objective 1: Williamson County will develop a plan that will help identify and prioritize significant historic resources within the community as well as a variety of methods to protect such resources long into the future.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOAL 1: EFFICIENT PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

In order to foster an efficient provision of services, development will occur in a more compact form, with growth oriented in and around existing and planned service areas.

Objective 1: Growth will generally be directed toward existing or planned service areas and pushed away from rural areas with rural levels of services.



Objective 2: New residential uses (other than low-density rural residential) will be directed to areas that can be efficiently served with sanitary sewers or are appropriate for alternative sewer technologies, but only pursuant to the future land use plan.

GOAL 2: ADEQUATE PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Williamson County will ensure that public facilities have the capacity, are coordinated with the Comprehensive Plan, and are in place when needed to support and attract growth and development and maintain quality of life. Land use decisions will be made based on identification of appropriate patterns pursuant to the future land use plan, not on the availability of alternative sewer technology.

Objective 1: New development will be served with public facilities that meet or exceed level of service standards for public facilities that will be developed or refined as part of the implementation of this plan.

Objective 2: Fair and predictable standards will be developed for allocating infrastructure costs between the development community and the County.

Objective 3: The County will focus alternative sewage technologies that promote higher density developments into areas where growth is encouraged.

Objective 4: The County will establish policies and practices that control the location and operation of alternative sewage technologies with the interest of public health, safety and welfare in mind, either through regulation or through public operation and maintenance. Specifically, future land use patterns will not be driven by the availability of alternative sewer technology.

GOAL 3: GOVERNMENT, HEALTH, AND EDUCATION

Williamson County will help provide adequate and accessible government facilities and health care facilities, and will support the provision of educational facilities to all of its citizens.



Objective 1: Williamson County schools will meet and exceed all state requirements for education programs and facilities while continuing to identify alternative methods to fund educational services throughout the community.

TRANSPORTATION GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOAL 1: ADEQUATE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Williamson County will provide a transportation system designed to move people and goods and provide a level of service that supports targeted economic development and maintains a high quality of life.

Objective 1: Growth will be coordinated with adequate existing or planned transportation facilities.

Objective 2: Land use will be planned in concert with transportation facilities. Low-density uses will be planned in areas not efficiently served by transportation facilities, and compatible higher densities may be planned in areas that can be efficiently served with transportation facilities (and other public facilities) pursuant to the future land use plan.

Objective 3: Williamson County will coordinate with other municipal and regional agencies to plan for transportation improvements in a method that will improve the timing of development relative to transportation improvements. Specifically, new roadways or roadway improvements will be promoted to be concurrent with new growth and development.

Objective 4: Williamson County will coordinate transportation improvements and level of service standards using the Comprehensive Plan as a tool. Specifically, Rural Areas that are intended to remain rural will continue to be provided with rural levels of service.



Objective 5: Williamson County will work with municipal, regional, and state agencies to incorporate context sensitive road designs to minimize negative impacts from new roadway projects, especially along designated historic or scenic corridors.

GOAL 2: TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES

Williamson County will continue to explore and promote mechanisms to alleviate traffic congestion through the use of alternative modes of transportation, and better management of the existing road network.

Objective 1: Williamson County will continue to identify opportunities to incorporate alternative transportation modes. In particular, Williamson County will cooperate with other jurisdictions to promote alternative modes of transportation on a regional basis.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOAL 1: BALANCED ECONOMY

Williamson County will continue to enjoy a growing and balanced economy, which will equitably benefit all segments of the population and will be consistent with prudent management of the County's resources.

Objective 1: Williamson County will promote the retention and expansion of existing businesses.

Objective 2: Williamson County will use economic development opportunities as a method of funding growth and the related infrastructure and public facilities needs that growth creates.

Objective 3: Williamson County will focus economic development opportunities in Planned Growth Areas and within the Urban Growth Boundaries, with the



exception that agricultural, heritage tourism, or rural oriented businesses are encouraged in Rural Areas.

Objective 4: Williamson County will encourage the retention of local retail in Rural Areas, and encourage new compatible small scale local retail in Rural Areas.

HOUSING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOAL 1: QUALITY AND DIVERSE HOUSING

Williamson County will support a balanced range of adequate life-span housing options designed to meet the needs of its ever changing demographics.

Objective 1: A better balance of housing price points will be targeted in order to provide a diverse range of housing options.

Objective 2: Housing diversity will be further pursued to meet the needs of the County's changing demographics, including higher density and attached housing options in targeted areas, particularly targeted at the aging population.

Objective 3: In order to provide a variety of viable housing options, the County will promote and encourage the preservation of the existing housing stock.

Objective 4: Compatible infill housing will be encouraged as a means to providing housing diversity.



INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOAL 1: REGIONAL COORDINATION

Regional coordination will be emphasized. This coordination will set regional priorities, identify shared needs, and find collaborative solutions, particularly related to problems that transcend local jurisdiction boundaries.

Objective 1: Williamson County, the cities within the county, and the school system will work together to achieve the mutual goals and policies and to efficiently plan for development in the community as a whole and not as individual parts.

Objective 2: Mechanisms and processes for intergovernmental coordination will be explored and implemented with other jurisdictions in order to implement the policies of this Plan, including adjacent local governments, school boards, and other units of government providing services.

Objective 3: Williamson County will develop mechanisms designed to coordinate with the applicable portions of its land use plan with the land use plans of the municipalities, school boards and other entities. These mechanisms will be designed to ensure compatibility with those various plans and will coordinate the locations of new facilities that affect land use patterns and services.

Objective 4: Williamson County will develop mechanisms to resolve conflicts with other local governments, coordinate the impacts of development on adjacent areas or communities, share services or information, and engage in coordinated planning in Urban Growth Areas.

Objective 5: Williamson County will develop intergovernmental tools in collaboration with the municipalities that address interim planning policies within the designated Urban Growth Boundaries prior to the time at which such territory is annexed to the municipalities.



CHAPTER 4: LAND USE ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

For the purpose of the Plan, all property within unincorporated Williamson County outside of designated Urban Growth Boundaries will be placed into one of the following land use categories:

- Rural Preservation (East and West)
- Hamlet
- Village
- 840 Center
- Suburban Infill and Conservation

For each land use category, background is provided as to the planning issues, opportunities, and challenges. A vision statement is then provided for each, followed by development policies that will guide the County in future land use discussions and decisions.

[NOTE: Illustrations and photographs to be added.]

RURAL PRESERVATION

BACKGROUND

The Rural Preservation Areas encompass the largest land area within the Williamson County Comprehensive Plan study area. Included is all of the geographic area not contained within a Hamlet, Village, 840 Center, or Suburban Infill and Conservation Area.

As its name suggests, the Rural Preservation Area is characterized primarily by rural related land uses on large tracts of land, including farms, homesteads associated with



farms, large lot single family properties, conservation subdivisions with low gross densities, and wooded or forested areas. While some active farming operations continue to exist in the rural areas, very few people actually farm as their primary livelihood.

The area is served primarily by a rural level infrastructure. The area is not generally served with sanitary sewers. Public roads are typically paved roads without curb and gutters. The local road network is designed to support very low density rural levels of development.

Rural Preservation Areas are blessed with substantial historic, cultural and environmental resources. There are many historic homes and homesteads in the area as well as historic and scenic road corridors, such as Natchez Trace. There are numerous environmentally sensitive resources such as slopes, flood plains, and wooded and forest areas.

There are several important differences between the Rural Preservation Areas on the east side and west side of the County. The eastern Rural Preservation Areas (generally east of Interstate 65) have historically been home to more active farming operations, with topography and soils that make them better suited for active agricultural uses. In the western portion of the County, more severe topography and soils that are not as suited for agricultural uses have resulted in relatively fewer active agricultural areas and more wooded and forested areas. As a result, the eastern areas have historically been more developed for agricultural and supporting uses than the western areas. This historic difference is now reflected in the densities permitted by the zoning designations. Generally, much of the eastern area is zoned to permit a density equivalent to one dwelling unit per acre, while much of the western rural areas are zoned to permit a density equivalent to one dwelling unit per five acres.

Rural Preservation Areas are highly valued by the citizens of Williamson County for their historic and environmental resources with an agrarian character that serve as a strong complement to the growing urban and suburban communities in Williamson County. The Comprehensive Plan goals and objectives are clear in calling for the rural areas to be preserved as low density with a rural character and rural levels of public services. There are several important influences, however, that will make the preservation of the rural character of these areas a challenge.



First, the southwestern arc of State Route 840 around the Nashville metropolitan area has already traversed the eastern portion of the Rural Preservation Area and is planned to continue to the western portion. At the current time, there are plans for seven interchanges with local Williamson County streets along Route 840. Access to this regional transportation infrastructure will undoubtedly bring additional growth pressures to this part of the region, some of which are already being felt in and around Thompson's Station and Spring Hill.

The growing popularity of alternative sewage treatment technology and their increased acceptance by the State of Tennessee are also bringing increased growth pressures into the Rural Preservation Areas. In the past, the lack of sanitary sewer solutions has acted as a natural brake on development pressures that were subject to stringent septic system requirements. Alternative sewage disposal technologies (such as various versions of land application systems) are argued to be more environmentally sensitive, at least in the short range. However, they bring with them concerns about the possible proliferation of subdivisions in rural areas, promoting sprawled development patterns that are contrary to the goals and objectives to this Plan. Further, as a relatively new technology, their long term environmental impacts are not yet known.

Regional growth patterns will also continue to change the growth dynamics in the area. The cities of Brentwood and Franklin continue to be long range growth generators, but with their long history of planning and development, the effects of that growth have been relatively predictable. Recently, other communities that have previously generated little growth, such as Thompson's Station, Spring Hill, Fairview, and Nolensville, are now showing increased potential for high growth. While these communities are certainly entitled to plan for their own long term growth and progress, they do have the potential to change the growth dynamics in Williamson County by creating multiple potential growth generators.

In addition, the western portion of the Rural Preservation Area has seen an influx of new investment, much of it by large land owners interested in preserving the rural character of the area. While this can certainly be a very positive trend from an open space preservation perspective (much land has been permanently preserved through mechanisms such as conservation easements), it also has the potential to change the dynamics of land economics, by making land more valuable and potentially more susceptible to investment that may be interested in seeing it develop for more intensive uses.



Finally, it should be acknowledged that the Rural Preservation Areas provide open space that is enjoyed by much of the County as a whole. However, this Plan recognizes that this is, in effect, “borrowed open space” in that it is open space provided by private land owners with no guarantees that it will remain. It cannot be expected to remain in its current state without active measures, including both reasonable land regulations as well as permanent mechanisms to preserve open space as discussed elsewhere in this Plan.

VISION

The Rural Preservation Areas will be rural in character, with preserved natural, cultural, and historic resources, including farms, permanently preserved open spaces, hillsides, hilltops, flood plains, wooded and forested areas, historic landscapes, historic corridors, and historic farmsteads. It will include active agricultural and equestrian operations, with new residential development designed in such a way as to be balanced with the natural and existing man made environment in order to minimize the degradation of the rural, natural, cultural, and historic environment.

DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

The following development policies will be used when addressing development and land use issues in the Rural Preservation Areas:

- Agricultural uses are recognized as economically desirable businesses, not “vacant” land. Agricultural uses are encouraged to remain, and agricultural preservation is an important goal, but this goal should be balanced with respect for the property rights of land owners.
- Rural commercial land uses and agricultural support businesses are encouraged to exist. Examples of rural commercial uses are commercial nurseries, feed and seed stores, farmers markets, farm implement sales and supply stores, and other farm support businesses. Larger uses that are not related to agricultural or other rural uses, such as commercial landscaping businesses with outdoor storage, and heavy equipment not used for farming are discouraged in the Rural Preservation Areas, and will be subject to impact review and mitigation during the development review process, with a heavy emphasis on land use buffers and transitions.
- Residents that move into Rural Areas should not expect urban services. Rural levels of service will typically not include public water, sanitary sewer, and storm water drainage facilities other than ditches.

- The environmental integrity of stream corridors should be preserved and protected.
- Agriculture should be viewed as being subject to eventual change. While the long term viability of agriculture is desirable, its future cannot be guaranteed. Thus, while the open nature of the area is enjoyed by many, and open space is a valued community amenity, agriculture should not be viewed as permanent open space. Open space preservation will require initiative and resources, as more fully described elsewhere in this Plan.
- The desired character for this area is a continuation of the historic rural and agricultural patterns, including farms, farm-service businesses, and pasture land for horses. New residential development will be accommodated, but it is encouraged to occur in the “conservation subdivision” style, as described below.
- Flexible design that maximizes open space preservation should be promoted by separating the issue of density from minimum lot size. This approach would permit a wide range of lot dimensions (area, frontage, setbacks, etc.) and a variety of housing types (detached and semi-detached) to serve multiple markets (traditional families, single-parent households, empty-nesters, etc.). Dedication of open space should be encouraged through incentives (density bonuses) based upon net density/yield rather than minimum lot size/widths.
- Open space should be designed to form an interconnected network, with provisions for linkages to existing or potential open space on adjoining properties.
- Pathways within open space and/or sidewalks along roadways should be provided to connect to surrounding pedestrian/bicycle networks.
- Fragmentation of open space into isolated, unconnected pieces should be avoided, except to provide neighborhood parks and commons.
- Stream corridors, woodlands, hedge rows, and other valuable natural resources should be maintained as part of the dedicated open space.
- Homesteads, historic rock walls, fence rows, and other historic resources should be protected through the design and development process.
- Roadways and house lots should be located to respect natural features and to maximize exposure of lots to open space (directly abutting or across the street). “Single-loaded” streets (with homes on one side only) can be used to maximize open space visibility, thus increasing real estate values and sales, while costing no more than streets in conventional subdivisions (due to savings from narrower lot frontages).
- Open space should be used as part of an integrated storm water management approach to maintain natural drainage patterns, attenuate water quality impacts, replenish groundwater (e.g., through bio-retention facilities such as infiltration trenches and “rain gardens”) and incorporate detention facilities as visual and environmental amenities such as ponds.
- The County will consider the allowance of additional density as an incentive to additional open space preservation, as further discussed in the implementation strategies of this Plan.



- The open space can be either common or dedicated for compatible agricultural and horticultural uses (e.g., pastureland for horses, greenhouses, pick-your-own operations, community-supported agriculture, etc.).
- Open space should be carefully located between housing lots, particularly those adjacent to working farms and other sensitive uses to provide buffers.
- Open space should be located to maintain the visual character of scenic roads (e.g., “foreground meadows” or preserved agricultural fields adjacent to roads).
- Roadways should be designed to standards appropriate to the rural context (narrower widths, drainage swales, shade trees, gravel footpaths, etc.).
- Open space management should promote rehabilitation of degraded habitats. These rehabilitation activities need to pay close attention to impacts on surrounding properties, particularly when those activities involve potential alterations to drainage patterns.
- This plan recognizes that certain division of parcels are exempt from subdivision regulations when they involve five or more acres and have sufficient road frontage. In these instances, the landowners will be encouraged to develop under the subdivision regulations by working with the landowners to offer flexible approaches to smaller scale parcel divisions.
- The County recognizes that the preservation of open spaces through the development review process alone will not achieve the long term goals of substantial permanent open space preservation, and that initiatives are needed that go beyond the zoning process. This approach will be discussed in the implementation strategies portion of this Plan.

APPROPRIATE LAND USES

- Agricultural and equestrian uses
- Single family uses, primarily in the form of conservation subdivision design
- Rural commercial uses such as commercial nurseries, feed and seed stores, farmers markets, farm implement sales and supply stores, and other farm support businesses
- Institutional uses, such as schools, churches, public safety facilities, and similar uses

HAMLET

BACKGROUND



Small Hamlets provide a unique form of land use in Williamson County. Hamlets are typically communities with a small (if any) residential population and housing stock that was typically built in the early part of the 20th Century. Hamlets usually evolved at the intersections of either two roads or a road and a rail line. There are approximately a dozen Hamlets interspersed throughout the Rural Preservation Areas in Williamson County.

These “crossroads” communities typically have a historic place name and were often home to small businesses such as small grocery stores, feed stores, and institutions such as churches, post offices, lodges, elementary schools or community centers. The classic Hamlet in Williamson County is (or was) home to a small grouping of residences, one or two small businesses, and one or two institutional uses.

Hamlets are important to Williamson County in that they provide small but historic focal points within a rural landscape. As such, they contribute to a sense of rural community character that goes beyond the actual magnitude of their land uses and geographic area. For this reason, the preservation of the historic character of Hamlets is an important goal of this Plan. Further, Hamlets offer the ability to accommodate some, but not a great deal of new growth in the County. Small amounts of new residential, business, and institutional uses could be accommodated in and around existing Hamlets. However, the scale and magnitude of new growth and development within these Hamlets should continue the scale and magnitude of the Hamlets themselves. Too much new development centered around Hamlets will overwhelm them and result in the loss of their historic character and role in overall County development.

Hamlets can also be an important element in the heritage tourism aspects of County economic development by providing small scale restaurants, bed and breakfasts, and shops for visitors.

For the purpose of this Plan, the following Hamlets have been identified on the Land Use Plan: Arrington, Bethesda, Boston, Burwood, Fernvale, Flat Creek, Greenbrier, Harpeth, Kingfield, Kirkland, and Rudderville.

VISION

The vision of Williamson County’s Hamlets is to “preserve and enhance” them. The existing character of the Hamlets should be preserved through historic preservation



programs and through the sensitive design of new development that maintains the Hamlet scale. The Hamlets should be enhanced with new investment that reinforces their historic character and scale.

DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

- Hamlets are desirable land use patterns that complement the Rural Preservation Areas. They can be expected to accommodate a minor share of the forecasted growth in Williamson County.
- When new development occurs, it should respect the existing pattern and scale of development.
- New development in a Hamlet should be “pedestrian friendly”, with sidewalks unless they are demonstrated by an applicant to be unpractical and not needed.
- New residential uses, non-residential uses and institutions are encouraged to locate in Hamlets, but only if they respect the scale and character of the Hamlet, and provide compatible density and intensity.
- Any existing historic character of Hamlets should be respected and preserved in new development. New development can be designed with modern amenities and features, and can be designed to “look new”, however, it should respect the scale, configuration, building orientation, density, pattern, materials, building relationship to street and general character of the existing Hamlet.
- While Hamlets can and should accommodate new growth to maintain their vitality, this growth should be limited so as not to overpower the scale of the Hamlet. While there is no precise amount of population that should be targeted, each Hamlet should be monitored as new development is proposed to ensure that its character is not compromised.
- Hamlets that grow beyond approximately 20 dwelling units, more than three businesses, or more than two institutional uses will be considered Villages and will be subject to the development policies associated with Villages.
- Hamlets should be linked to alternative transportation modes, such as pedestrian and bicycle trails, wherever feasible.
- The boundaries between Hamlets and surrounding Rural Preservation Areas should be clear and distinct. Hamlets should continue to be small as well as a definable focal point of minor activity. Hamlets should accomplish this without dominating the rural landscape.

APPROPRIATE LAND USES



- Detached and attached residential
- Institutional
- Small scale commercial
- Restaurants
- Bed and Breakfasts and Inns
- Small scale agricultural businesses

VILLAGE

BACKGROUND

Williamson County is fortunate to be home to several areas that have been identified as Villages in this Plan. Villages are similar to Hamlets in some ways, except that they occur at a larger scale, with more diverse land uses, and more complicated planning issues. Like Hamlets, Villages have historic roots and development patterns that are characteristic of the early 20th Century and in some instances, earlier. Like Hamlets, Villages typically evolved because of their geographic location to transportation routes.

For the purpose of this Plan, the following four Villages are identified on the Land Use Map:

- Leiper's Fork
- Grassland
- Triune
- College Grove

As contrasted with Hamlets, Villages are larger both in terms of numbers of businesses as well as numbers of residential dwelling units. Most of the Villages are not provided with urban services and are served with older septic systems. The Village of Grassland is an exception in that it is currently provided with sanitary sewer services. However, in the case of all Villages, their infrastructure is not designed to support substantial additional growth; if they are going to have growth beyond their current levels, the provision of adequate public facilities, including adequate sewage treatment, must be addressed.



The Villages typically have a pedestrian friendly environment with a “small town” feel that is valued not only by the people who live in the Villages but also by other County residents who see the Villages as being an important definition of the overall character of the community.

Some of the Villages have been “rediscovered” and are experiencing substantial reinvestment. Leiper’s Fork is an example of a Village that has quickly gone from being largely overlooked to being the subject of tremendous interest and investment, resulting in it becoming a true activity center for the western half of the County. While this creates vibrancy in the area, it can also attract attention and interest in more growth and change before the Village is able to adequately plan for that change.

The challenge for the Villages, as they are receiving reinvestment and being subjected to development pressures, is to maintain and preserve their historic and small town character.

VISION

The vision for the Villages is to preserve and protect their unique historic and small town character. They are and will continue to be activity centers and focal points within the Rural Preservation Areas. Limited new growth and development will occur only as part of individual Village plans designed to preserve and protect the unique character of each Village. These Special Area Plans will be developed as the need arises.

DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

- As contrasted with Hamlets, new growth and development in or around Villages should occur only pursuant to a Special Area Plan for the Village that identifies appropriate land uses, development standards, design guidelines, and adequate public facility requirements. The policies in this section apply to all Villages, but are to be supplemented with Special Area Plan policies unique to each Village, with development review procedures designed to ensure compliance with applicable Special Area Plan standards and policies.
- As part of each Special Area Plan, the geographic boundaries of any existing Crossroad Center Zoning District and others should be examined to ensure it is consistent with the Village’s Special Area Plan.
- New development in and around Villages should respect their existing character. It should help maintain the “small town” feel that the Villages strive to maintain. It is



important to recognize that there are ultimate limits to development in and around Villages, even when new development is designed well and with adequate provision of public services. The historic scale of Williamson County's Villages is such that beyond a certain size (population, number of new dwelling units, new businesses, and distance from center), the unique character of the Village will be lost. The Special Area Plans will define those ultimate size parameters for each Village.

- The street systems in Villages should have multiple interconnections. This allows multiple opportunities for people to walk to local destinations by a variety of routes. Streets should be designed for slower speeds to allow for mixing of vehicular and pedestrian traffic.
- There should be a short distance to amenities; sites should be designated for parks, schools, churches, stores, and other public gathering places.
- The density of Villages should generally reflect established patterns and densities.
- Mixed housing types can be permitted, including some alternative accessory housing options.
- Homes should be designed to relate to the street. The fronts of buildings should be oriented to the street, and the progression of public to private characteristics of traditional neighborhoods (street-sidewalk-front yard-front porch) should be preserved.
- New development should recognize the existing pattern of Villages and should be an unobtrusive way for the Village to grow while still maintaining their character.
- New development should fit into the existing pattern and street grid.

APPROPRIATE LAND USES

- Detached and attached residential
- Institutional
- Small scale commercial
- Restaurants
- Bed and Breakfasts and Inns
- Small scale agricultural and agricultural support businesses

840 CENTER

BACKGROUND



The construction of State Route 840 through Williamson County offers unique planning challenges and opportunities. Any place where a major metropolitan regional transportation system intersects with local roads will undoubtedly create the potential for growth pressures and opportunities. However, the mere presence of an interchange does not in and of itself mean that growth is appropriate. For this reason, this Plan identifies 840 Centers as a potential location of limited new growth opportunities.

Unlike Hamlets and Villages which involve potential for change around existing historic areas, the 840 Centers offer opportunities for new growth and development. In some ways the 840 Centers provide an opportunity to develop a new form of development that is analogous to the historic Villages, albeit one that is starting from scratch.

As a starting point, this Plan recommends only one area as an 840 Center – the area located within the existing Planned Growth Area 5.

VISION

The 840 Center will include new residential growth opportunities, along with a mix of local serving businesses. It will provide residential opportunities for people who desire easy access to this important regional transportation facility. Residential and business uses will meet high standards for development quality including both functional standards such as traffic circulation, access management, storm water management and other adequate public facilities requirements, as well as aesthetic standards related to quality of design and site layout.

DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

- The 840 Centers are valuable resources in the County and should be viewed as key symbolic entrances into the community.
- A single 840 center is identified as part of this Plan: Triune area within current Planned Growth Area (PGA) 5. Other interchanges along 840 are not identified for 840 Centers at this time. This Plan recommends a strategy of focusing activity in one Center where it can be most efficiently planned relative to public services. PGA 5 has long been the planned location for such growth.

- In the future, this Plan may be amended to identify other interchange areas to be 840 Centers, but only after demonstration of adequate provisions for public services and facilities, and according to a Special Area Plan for the area. In the meantime, those other interchanges will not accommodate new growth beyond that identified in the Rural Preservation Areas.
- New growth in the recommended 840 Center will be targeted to achieve a balance of residential and locally serving businesses. Of the residential, no more than 20% should be attached housing. Approximately [redacted] dwelling units will be planned for the area. Approximately [redacted] square feet of business area will be planned for the area (including local retail, services, and offices). **Note: Do we need to identify densities?**
- Compatible attached housing, including senior housing, is appropriate within the 840 Center as long as it does not exceed 20% of the number of units in the area, particularly when such uses are used as a land use transition.
- In the case of PGA 5, it will be important to recognize that this is also the location of one of the Villages recognized in this Plan. For this reason, the Village policies will also be applicable to the extent that new growth affects the Triune Village.
- New development in 840 Centers will be subject to flexible but predictable compatibility standards related to site planning, building design and materials, landscaping, and other features creating potential land use impacts.
- Signage in 840 Center Areas should be limited and integrated into an overall site-planning theme. Billboards will be prohibited.
- Special attention should be paid to architectural quality. Overall architectural themes should be developed for each 840 Center that is ultimately targeted for development.
- Traffic circulation and access should be carefully planned and managed so that it operates as a coordinated circulation system.

APPROPRIATE LAND USES

- Detached and attached residential
- Neighborhood commercial
- Institutional

SUBURBAN INFILL AND CONSERVATION

BACKGROUND



There are limited areas within the Williamson County Comprehensive Plan targeted for growth and development with a suburban pattern with a focus on infill. These include the current Plan Growth Areas 1, 2, and 3, which, together, form a single cluster of Suburban Infill and Conservation land uses in the northern area of the County. This area is identified as such largely because it has already developed with a Suburban Infill and Conservation character. It also has unique circumstances associated with it relative to its sewage treatment facilities and its proximity to regional growth forces.

While the pattern of development in the area has already been established as a Suburban Infill and Conservation pattern, there are still substantial planning issues remaining. First, the remaining undeveloped land is largely fragmented, creating incremental infill challenges. Much of the remaining undeveloped land is constrained with either floodplain or steep slopes. The easily developable land has already been developed, leaving the more difficult and challenging land remaining.

There are actually three different sewer providers in the area. PGAs 1 and 2 include systems with point discharges into the Harpeth River watershed, creating serious constraints to future capacity. PGA 3 is served by the Harpeth Valley Water Authority, which does have capacity for additional growth and development. In this case, the zoning and natural resources limit development in the area, not the sanitary sewer.

The primary challenges in this area involve accommodating continued development pressures while protecting sensitive environmental features and providing safe and adequate public facilities.

VISION

The vision for the Suburban Infill and Conservation area is to ensure that as it continues to develop that it do so with compatible land uses and densities. This continued development will be done in such a way that natural resources are preserved and protected and adequate public facilities are provided.

DEVELOPMENT POLICIES



The Suburban Infill and Conservation Areas will be largely residential. Any supporting non-residential uses will occur in the Grassland Village.

- High quality development should be encouraged through improved site plan and design review standards, particularly related to landscaping, signs, building design and orientation, and parking lot design in commercial land uses.
- Pedestrian facilities should be included in all new developments, unless circumstances make this unrealistic. In particular, improved connections between key destination areas should be developed. Examples of this connectivity are between residential and commercial areas, and between residential, parks and school areas.
- High value should be placed on quality open space as part of suburban development. Open spaces should not be designated as an afterthought based simply on land that is left over in the site plan review process, but rather used as an integrated part of the development.
- Environmental quality standards should continue to be incorporated in the development review process, particularly related to runoff, stream protection, and tree protection.
- New development should be coordinated and timed relative to infrastructure. Infrastructure, particularly sewer and water service, should be available concurrently with new development.
- New infrastructure should be planned to be adequate for both existing and planned growth. Level of service standards should be developed to ensure that adequate public facilities are provided in both the short term and long term.
- Suburban residential uses should emphasize more “connectivity” between subdivisions, and avoid creating isolated islands of development.
- Other uses, such as parks, schools, churches, and senior housing, should be considered as appropriate ancillary uses when part of an integrated site design and when designed to minimize negative impacts.
- Land use regulations should be flexible in terms of density. While overall density limits (gross density) should be established, the ability to construct on smaller lots while preserving open space and environmental features (net density) should be allowed as part of a site plan review process with quality based guidelines.
- Subdivisions should be designed with regard to pedestrian scale, particularly with regard to street width, alignment, and designed vehicular speed.

APPROPRIATE LAND USES

- Detached and attached residential
- Senior housing



- Institutional

Note: Should this area also be subject to a small area plan and the creation of a zoning district with design guidelines geared toward achieving these development policies?

MUNICIPAL GROWTH AREAS

BACKGROUND

The Municipal Growth Areas are those lands that surround Williamson County's cities and are identified for growth through the system of Urban Growth Boundaries (UGBs) mandated by Tennessee Public Chapter 1101. They are the areas where the bulk of the future growth and development is intended to occur in the county, in accordance with the plans of each individual community.

This plan embraces a land use pattern that preserves rural character with an environmental and historic preservation focus. It encourages growth to occur in and around the existing communities that are better able to provide urban or suburban level services and facilities, especially related to sanitary sewer and roads. This plan calls for a compact form of growth with rural low densities around focused growth areas, rather than suburban and rural sprawl. The role of the Municipal Growth Areas is critical to the success of this plan.

The issues associated with implementing this form of land use have to do primarily with intergovernmental coordination. On the one hand, this plan accepts the land use plans for the growth areas around municipalities, as embodied in their own plans for the Urban Growth Boundaries. It views those plans as a critical and complementary ingredient in the overall county land use strategy. On the other hand, until and unless those growth areas are annexed to a city, they remain under county planning and zoning jurisdiction. Further, if property in one of the municipal growth areas develops at a low density under county zoning, with rural infrastructure (such as septic or alternative sewer systems), it is not likely to be annexed in the future. In fact, low density development in an identified growth area represents an underutilization of land, which can be inefficient from an infrastructure perspective and result other portions of the county feeling the pressures of growth.



The primary challenge in these Municipal Growth Areas involves developing policies as to how this land should be addressed from a planning and zoning perspective during the time it remains under county zoning jurisdiction, which could be many years in some cases.

VISION

The vision for the Municipal Growth Areas is for it to remain largely undeveloped until such time as it is annexed into a city and developed under their system of planning and land use regulation. For those property owners who desire to develop their land prior to a city being prepared to annex it, the county and the respective city will coordinate the review of the development to address issues of multi-jurisdictional impacts with the intent that the land will ultimately be annexed into the city.

DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

- The Municipal Growth Areas will be coterminous with the Urban Growth Boundaries under Tennessee Public Chapter 1101 at the time of this plan adoption. In the event of a change in Urban Growth Boundaries, this plan will be amended to address the land use impacts associated with the change.
- It is the policy of this plan that the Municipal Growth Areas should be developed in the respective cities under their land use plans. Developers will be encouraged to work with the municipalities during the development-planning phase bearing in mind that annexation will occur.
- While still under the County's jurisdiction, these areas will be subject to the policies for the Rural Preservation Areas identified earlier in this chapter. Note: this policy will be refined once the densities of rural areas is discussed and determined.
- Alternative non-municipal sanitary sewer systems are discouraged. Development should occur in accordance with the municipalities' sanitary sewer plan.
- The county will work with municipalities to develop intergovernmental agreements for additional coordinating policies relative to the development review in those areas

APPROPRIATE LAND USES

- Agricultural and equestrian uses
- Single family houses on existing parcels



- Uses permitted under municipal land use plans when annexed into a city



CHAPTER 5: IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

To be drafted.